

TWO MYSTERIOUS CATS

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It was a cold autumn's afternoon. The ice on the streets was like a mirror on which the people's shadows and images reflected. The ten-year-old blonde Elisa with deep blue eyes gave up playing with her cellphone; she stopped playing the colorful candy game from which she earned a teddy bear sent to her home three days ago. The pink teddy bear was sitting on her white bed with a light pink pillow and a fuchsia cover. Pink and its tones are not only girlish, but also sweet signs of hope for her! Nature was the human's best friend as a shelter as she enjoyed sitting in the green grass in the garden of her home in the spring. Nature was all around; animals were our friends as their toy versions; flowers were providing us oxygen for our survival. The raindrops were feeding crops. Nature was the cure for many illnesses via its products full of vitamins. But in this gloomy afternoon, she sat next to the window curiously to observe the world outside, but she yawned lazily, staring at some falling yellow leaves through the vaporous window. The month of November was about to end. Chicago was a huge city in Illinois where she had been living. She was living in the suburbs. She watched the untalkative nine-year-old daughter of the neighbors next door through the transparent window she decorated with light colored huge heart stickers, symbols for friendship against enmity, in fact; both families were living in duplex villas, symbols of prosperity in the darkness of the effects of climate change: new viruses and illnesses

were occurring, earthquakes were shaking different islands and countries, the arctic ice was melting slowly. Despite these, animals were lovable forever friends of all the human beings.

Despite equal economic conditions, the talents of every individual were not equal.

Elisa thought, “Carol, the daughter of the native American neighbors in the right house next door is amazing, but she is silent... all the time.... She uses strange hand gestures to communicate with her whole family and the postman who brings gifts to her every day. Many sent gifts to her.”

Elisa opened the window and took a deep breath. Her eyes were full of tears just due to some sort of envy.

The postman came and said to Carol with hand gestures and talking loudly at the same time, “Here is a thank-you-postcard for your environmental protection drawings to hang on the town’s nurseries’ boards. Besides, here is another certificate and a necklace from the municipality, thanking you for developing a tool, an app against pollution and microbes.”

Carol smiled, waived her hand, and closed the door slowly. She was shaking her hands above by showing her palm a bit, while smiling for implying that she was happy. Elisa’s eyes were covered with tears due to jealousy, but she admired a fluffy cat standing on the corner of the street where she and Carol lived as neighbors. She went downstairs secretly, she took some boiled sausages from the refrigerator in the narrow kitchen, although they were cold. She put on her dark blue coat and wore her red cap, left the door open, and showed the three sausages she had to the Maine Coon kitten over there; the hungry kitten rushed to eat the sausages; Elisa started to pet the poor little cat, while she was eating, and she called her “Destiny.”

As Destiny had neither hurt her with her claws nor bitten her, she took her to the bathroom; she locked the bathroom's door, filled the sink with lots of warm water, and started to wash the muddy cat, meowing angrily; she used her own sensitive baby shampoo with blueberries and rosemary whose perfume soothed the cat, the blue and green shiny bubbles were all around the bathroom. Later she took her own light blue toothbrush, put a tiny amount of toothpaste on it, and started to brush the teeth of the silent and patient cat. The white fur on the belly of the cat was shining, the yellow mane of the little lion was shimmering; her light brown hair with dark brown lines were thick and shiny. Destiny was rolling around and rolling around by showing her belly. Elisa took her out of the light green basin with a grey fluffy towel and dried it with the hair dryer; it rolled repeatedly on Elisa's bed, while Elisa was holding the lukewarm wind of her beige tiny hairdryer on it. Happiness was surrounding all around. Elisa hid the kitten in a pink straw toy basket she had as a five-year-old child. It fell asleep on the soft light pink pillow with tiny red tulips with green leaves on it as fascinating natural designs. Destiny was clean now without any viruses on it.

Elisa went on observing Carol, thinking that she was an example hardworking socially responsible and environmentally conscious child: Carol was in the kitchen, she took her pink wooden toothbrush with white and blue bristles as well as her usual menthol toothpaste; she went to the bathroom, turned on the lights and the warm water; the water was not blurry; it was flowing down slowly from the tap; the water was mixing up with the green foams of the toothpaste on the completely white basin with red poppies. Nature was everywhere. Carol was opening her mouth full of bubbles; however, Elisa was usually brushing her pearl-like teeth, while singing, whistling through her bubbly lips loudly. Carol was grasping the toothbrush very tightly. The water's sound was as loud as that of a mountain fountain. She was moving her light

pink toothbrush up and down from left to right. Bubbles were invading her mouth. She was tired; her eyes were wide open, while she was observing the whiteness of her teeth, and an orange pulp between her two teeth difficult to take. Nature has created fruits for our health, but we should not create any viruses for its destruction by being dirty. She stopped brushing her teeth and took a wooden toothpick, put it between her two teeth, squeezed her mouth and took the pulp out of her mouth. She re-put some toothpaste on her brush and started to brush her teeth again: up and down, and right and left! The green and white bubbles in her mouth invaded all the basin, the smell of the minty toothpaste was all around. Even Elisa felt it. Carol decided to turn the water off for a while. She used mint as she found that nature was a blessing; she was careful about not consuming too much water for not causing aridity in this unique world where hygiene was so crucial that every individual had to keep it not only for their own survival, but also for the animals and plants that can become extinct due to pernicious viruses. The water started to dribble: tick tock...! She was obstinate enough to go on brushing her teeth. She cleaned her teeth with a toothpick as well; she smiled looking into the mirror. She smiled.... But she could not talk. Her teeth were beautiful, but she could not utter any words. However, brushing teeth leads to health for sure; “there is a constant war against microbes,” Elisa thought and made a face, and started to analyze Destiny, feeling the happiness of being tidy: “Purr... Purr... Purr...”. Elisa put a bowl full of peas and two sausages and another bowl full of fresh drinking water in front of the basket. Who could be happier than this lovely cat? Elisa lied in her bed and started to read a cartoon book. However, the little almost six-month-old cat did not have any litter boxes. Elisa’s mom had gone to the patisserie as she wanted to buy some chocolate cake for the family; Elisa’s dad was usually working in the attic as it was his home office; he was always busy selling online

postcards he drew or offering online Spanish and Computer Science courses. Elisa had neither sisters nor brothers. Lonely girl! She was staying at home on that Saturday instead of going out.

Suddenly, the doorbell had rung, and Elisa rushed downstairs from her room on the second floor to open it: “Hi, mommy; where is the cake?”

Mommy: “I bought a huge chocolate and chestnut cake for the whole family; you will eat it with a cup of apple juice. You will love it. It is five o’clock; let us get prepared for the teatime!”

Elisa: “Teatime? Shall I give you a hand?”

Mommy: “Prepare the table in the hall.”

Elisa: “O.K. I will put the pink cover with tiny blue leaves on the table, and I will put three white porcelain plates, three silver forks and knives. They are steel, not silver, but I wished they had been silver, or gold.”

Mommy: “Thank you, luxury lover lady!”

Elisa: “I am putting two transparent glass cups for you and daddy, and a tall glass for my apple juice.”

Mommy: “That is it!”

However, suddenly, the father came, narrating, “The world had become so dark for me. The wind blew on a horrible November day, I had not washed my face in the morning, I touched my face with my dirty hands after using my phone and holding some cash money; all the dust went into my left eye; I felt sudden flashes and saw yellow stars and pink butterflies. My left eye was totally pinkish, and tears were coming down out of it. I took a cab, the cab standing in front me, and asked the driver to bring me to the closest eye clinic or optician. He brought me to a white

sweet-scented eye clinic: ‘The mature pomegranates and the green yard.’ What a relieving hospital name! It made me shiver and laugh at the same time. I was frightened as I entered a large hospital, but I laughed for its funny name as it reminded me of a supermarket or a farmer's market. This hospital was not in the quarter I was living in; I was just visiting this quarter as I wanted to go to a famous hairdresser. However, I found myself in the eye clinic of the quarter, but not in the famous fashionable men's hairdresser's shiny hair-styling salon. I entered the five-floor building smelling sodium chloride, and blurry oculists, wearing a white-long uniform, were walking all around. They took me to the emergency room, they measured my blood pressure, and they took my eyesight number information by the help of a huge computer. I felt flashes of light passing through my eyes. Some floaters, cobwebs, and flashes were passing through my left eye. A fat bald fifty-year old optician with a black mustache took me to his office room. He squeezed an eye drop in my left eye to enlarge my left pupil. I heard a child screaming for not entering an optician's room. A seventy-year-old woman had a cataract surgery with her eyes covered with two eye pads. A blind seventeen-year-old teenager was trying to walk without hurting or bumping into anybody. I felt compassion and empathy at that time. What would my world become if I were blind? I was horrified. Two nurses took some coffee from the coffee machine; they did not put some milk in it; they were resting during the break. The secretaries were registering numerous patients. There was a large queue going out of the building; the patients without appointments were in a long queue. I waited for ten minutes, and my bald fat doctor, Mr. Ali Deniz William Smith invited me to his room; he asked me to read some large and other small letters. He looked into my eyes with a yellow light. Oh, my blurry pinkish left eye! He sat on his chair, turned on his huge computer, prescribed some drugs and drops for me. I was suffering from different eye infections. I was happy that my retina had not been torn, and I was not going

to become blind. I saluted everybody and rushed to the pharmacy. My half-day tiredness in the hospital was over; I spent the afternoon there, seeing hailing patients before and after their eye surgeries due to cataracts, retina tears, blindness, or laser treatments. In the end, I was happy that I had not lost my vision yet, although I was wearing eyeglasses due to my myopia. But don't forget to wash your face every morning! I had not washed my face in the morning, and I had not washed my hands after playing with my phone; my eyes got infected! Be clean!"

Mother: "Weren't you at home? Was my daughter lonely?"

Elisa: "I did not notice that."

Father: "She was not nasty."

Then suddenly the mother noticed that the floor was wet; there was water next to a chair in the hall; it was not like water, though.

Mother: "I see water over there. Elisa, what is that?"

Then the lovely Maine Coon came in front of the mother and started to gaze at her. The mother was shocked, and said, "She needs to be taken to the vet before being accepted home."

It was a cloudy November day in Chicago. The skyscrapers were bright, Christmas preparations had just begun. Then the family took the cat, put it in a pink fabric bag with a huge red rose on it, Destiny's head was out, she was looking around, and the father drove to the vet that was about one hundred kilometers away. A lovely twenty-year-old blue-haired lady called Tania welcomed them, greeting them, "Hi, I am Tania; we have lots of sweet cats and dogs here that may brighten your day, and one of them may become your forever friend."

The whole family said warmly, “Thank you! This cat needs to be injected, checked up, and she will be our forever friend.”

Tania said, “Let's go to that section of fluffy cat vets.”

There were a lot of lovely dogs, and then they passed to the cat section. Elisa, the daughter, “I liked that fluffy little Maine Coon over there next to the black cat, fighting with the male ginger cat.” Tania replied, “She is Salsa; she is seven months old. Would you like her? She has a strange behavior; she knows the numbers, and she hisses at strangers strangely.”

The whole family said, “We want her, too!” Contracts were signed, and the family took her, too. They had two Maine Coon cats, and they returned home with the two healthy cats they had saved, gave them some cat food and water, and they ate their cake celebrating the arrival of their two female cats.

On Sunday, everybody was napping during the afternoon. The cat called Salsa was awake, and escaped through the window of her home, but entered through the pink window of the deaf-mute ten-year old girl's room, sat in front of her, and started to communicate with her using the hand gestures of the American sign language. It was unbelievable. Elisa woke up and tried to find the cat. She and her parents rang the doors of every house in the street; Carol, the deaf-mute could not hear. Her mother opened the door, "Hello, how are you?"; when they heard the meows, they accused Carol of stealing the cat, “We cannot find our cat; Carol stole it; what a horrible thief she is!”

However, the cat drew a picture, and went on using the sign language; Carol's dog, Sunlight started to bark and tried to attack them, but he had two puppies.

Both families understood the magical case, and exchanged the miraculous cat with the two puppies, they called “Snowy” and “Shiny.”

Destiny also started to make hand gestures; the two lovely cats were communicating with Carol. So, the family gave Destiny to Carol as a gift, too. Everybody made peace in the end.

Empathy is a must, believe in the power of animals, and listen to your heart and to the truth! Pay attention to the words of all without judging them! All the species are friends! Be clean against their extinction!

Besides, it was the birthday of silent Carol who could not make any sounds, but who could make just hand gestures; in addition, she could develop computer programs; Elisa would admire her since she remembered that she had beaten her in a chess tournament two years before; despite this temporary rivalry, she gave her a pair of cat-shaped tiny silver earrings with this letter:

“Dear Carol,

Be aware of your full potential. Today is your birthday. Everywhere is full of shiny ornaments such as colorful balloons, gold and silver candles that smell like gardenia as you like gardenia flowers, and colorful ribbons. You worked on a mobile application preventing pollution and dirt caused by excessive trashes, producing viruses and illnesses, as a great student. Your application is used in many schools around the globe today. When a child throws trash on the street, in a garden, or in a park, does not wash her or his hands after getting dirty somehow, the application you developed detects these actions and sends angry faced animal shapes, or emojis to these kids, damaging the earth by polluting it, or causing the reproduction of viruses by being dirty, for warning them. If they go on polluting the earth for the fifth time, the application you developed locks their phones, tablets, or computers and publishes videos on the Internet on their crime of

polluting the earth and distributing viruses by not brushing their teeth, or by not their washing mouths, hands, or faces, and throwing trash around instead of using the recycling boxes. So, you managed to reduce the rate of pollution and viruses. Your application also detects the workplaces of adults that never use recycling boxes or those where hands are never washed. In this case, you send angry beeping sounds to warn the adults about their unjustifiable behavior; your application sends videos on their dirty unhealthy habits threatening the human and animal species by creating viruses if they do not wash their hands, use sanitizers, or recycle their trash for the fifth time. Many adults have become aware of the environment and are afraid of the extinction of many species including humans thanks to your lovely application. The rate of dirty adults threatening the mother earth decreased suddenly after the promotion of the use of your application in our state last year; many global workplaces purchased it and they are happy about the extreme tidiness in their headquarters and offices. Know that you are a gift! You know about mathematics, linguistics, and programming as a ten-year-old child. We admire you and your scholarship. You saved millions from extinction. You saved nature! Respect yourself! We are proud of you. You are a jewel. You are a female genius, inventing useful computational tools! You are doing great! You are great! Happy birthday from the depths of our hearts. Life is beautiful as you teach; there are tech solutions to problems created by society! You find these solutions. Thumbs up, our dear jewel! Besides, I was jealous of the postcards, awards, or gifts the postman brought: congratulations on sending drawings to nurseries about environmental issues such as animal rights, climate change, plastic bags, etc., too! I will never be toxic again!"

Carol said through hand gestures, "Let's go to the park!"

Elisa replied, "Yep!"

They went to make snow cats and dogs, while the first snowflakes were falling, and these had already covered everywhere.

Elisa explained, “While it was snowing in winter, we generally went to a park next to our home for making snowmen or snowwomen with carrot noses, coal eyes, and tomato lips.”

Carol nodded for confirming this. The cats and the dogs played with the snow, too and celebrated Carol’s birthday confirming that everybody is a gift, and every gift must form a team to build technological and earth-friendly gifts to save the humanity, but the best gift on earth is love, whereas the worst enemy of the whole earth is envy, for all the creatures and the survival of species and protection of nature! Every creature needs injections, vitamins, plants, and accordingly, nature! The mysterious cats called Destiny and Salsa showed that deafness is not a fault; but being dirty was a fault and a danger to the existence of the whole earth! Not only were they washed, but they also licked themselves... They learned to speak American sign language to befriend a human... All the creatures are friends! Protect the mother earth by being clean and responsible!

About the author:

Fazila Derya Agis earned her Ph.D. at Ankara University in Italian Language and Literature, having defended her dissertation on the letters of Amerigo Vespucci from an ecocritical perspective. She earned her M.S. degree in Social Anthropology from Middle East Technical University, her M.A. degree in English Linguistics from Hacettepe University, and her B.A. in Italian Language and Literature from Ankara University. She has taught courses in Translation Studies at Girne American University, and she has been teaching online World Literature and Composition courses for the University of People. She worked also as a visiting scholar in Brandeis University's Hadassah-Brandeis Institute.

